2: Wilson E-S (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakaswana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*akutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *akutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law. [88]

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*akasyano*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*amisyo*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*nide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready. [255] [257] [531]

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.' [88] [515] [177]

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'. [184]

[2] I.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers. [601]

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats. [352]

3: Mackenzie M-S (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

323 415 317 one will sometimes meet with long strings of men and women, carrying ten to a dozen pots, hawking them round the upland villages, or offering them for sale at the local market at Tukuyu. The pots made at [531] Matema are smeared on the outside with a dull red ochre, and the more artistic potters work patterns in red, with thin lines around the protruding middle, and herring-bone or crossed patterns from thence to lip and base.

353 I once slept in a native house in which there was a double row of pots, one on top of the other, along two walls. I was told that they were there for ornamental purposes, "just as you white men have pictures on your walls."

285 415 Basket work is done everywhere, and a great variety of baskets are made. Immense *ifitaba*, for storing grain, up to four feet high, and perhaps ten feet in girth, are to be found in almost every family. Smaller baskets for carrying goods of all kinds; wide shallow baskets for sifting grain; others for serving food, and yet others for drinking beer. The latter are so closely woven that they will hold water, and are made from a fine grass, which is found only in certain regions. A new development of this industry is the making of articles to European, or native, order; hats, table mats, baskets with hinged lids and divisions inside, almost anything can be made if a specimen is given to the maker as a sample from which he may copy what is wanted. Basket work includes also the large and small fish traps in use at the lake or on the rivers.

286 Net making is naturally confined to the lake shore

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FNI7 Ngonde FNI7
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After these admonitions, the mats which the girl had manufactured were inspected. During this examination it was told her that a wife should be seen in the possession of as many beautiful mats as possible, made by her for herself and for her husband. Should the girl reveal such conduct as a wife, *ubuzengulafu* (happiness) would be in her hut.

When the proper ceremony seemed to have come to an end, another discussion followed. The girl had told the *wanyago*, during the above mentioned admonition, that her parents also sometimes exchanged angry words. Therefore, a new discussion between the father and the mother arose, in which also the *wanyago* was the "speaker", but the other participants of the ceremony also shared in it, and the discussion too became at times heated. Still, after about 15 minutes, it suddenly came to an end, and the matter in dispute was declared settled. With this the whole ceremony ended.

8. One day I asked the chief for permission to visit his huts. He dwelt in a rectangular hut (*ikibaga*). A very beautiful *ikitara* (bed) was in the main room, composed of many sleeping mats (*ubulele*, pl. *imilele*) and of big round wooden blocks (sections of a tree-trunk), one at the head and a smaller one at the foot of the bed. Each of the four fine mats which lay uppermost had a special name. All the mats rested on sticks of reed laid across beams lying on smaller poles on the floor[6]. These mats were naturally of nearly the same height as the wooden block which formed the head part of the *ikitara*. In some other old-fashioned and better houses in Nyakyusa villages, similar beds were to be seen, but generally the bedsteads are much more simple.

One of the most important permissions granted me by the chief was to enter the "store room", connected with his main room by a door. The objects to be seen here were the same as those to be found in other huts or store-rooms, e. g. the big *ifitubo* (baskets) for storing grain, up to four feet high, smeared over with cow-dung and clay, and smaller baskets for different purposes. In one corner hung different kinds of dancing fans (*urukope*, sg.) made of hairs from the tails of bulls, with fine handles of horn. In the dark opposite corner of the same wall there seemed to hang a similar object, but it was wrapped in banana bast. This was the real sign of the chief's dignity, the symbol of his authority and power, named *ubuswipala*. A long discussion was needed to induce the chief to unveil it. Only by constantly consulting by glances the present *amafumu* the chief slowly unveiled it. He told us that

[6] Cf. Fülleborn, p. 381.

very substantial, the main meal being taken in the evening shortly before sunset.

8. Manufacture. The pot for cooking (*indebu*) is placed on three stones which form the hearth (*ikipembwa*, hearth stones). The flat bowl made of clay used for the seeds of the kilubwe is called *ulwesupubio* and a pig pot used for storing water *ingumbe*. The pots of clay are manufactured by Kisi women because in their land on the north-eastern shores of Lake Nyasa the best clay is found. In the eastern part of the Nyakyusa country adjacent to Kisi land the women visit the pottery markets of the Kisi, but to the remoter villages, e. g. around the Rungwe volcano the pottery is brought by Kisi men. In this case, owing to the great distance from the Kisi-Land the men carry the loads of eight to ten pots on their head between split poles of bamboo. The Kisi pots I saw in the Rungwe Station were ornamented in a rough way with red ochre and seemed only slightly baked. The hearth stones, however, are made by the Nyakyusa women themselves as I was able to observe near Rutenganio, where widows manufactured them for sale.

In many villages of the Nyakyusa I could watch basket-making. This I saw being done by men. In the chief's hut in Katumba I had the opportunity to admire a great number of very big baskets (*ifituba*) for storing grain, smeared with cow dung on the outside. The attractive closely wickered baskets, which are filled with malesi (millet) and then placed in water for a night in the process of beer-brewing were originally made by the Busanyi, but nowadays also the Nyakyusa are said to be skilled enough to weave them. I had no opportunity to observe it, but could acquire an excellent specimen of that wicker-work.

9. The Meal. At the beginning of each meal the hands are washed, including those of children. The men take their meal separately from the women. The wives only eat when their husbands have been satisfied. Boys under ten years eat with their mothers, but as soon as they begin to live in age-set villages, they eat together with their friends of their own age-set, as described in detail by Mr. G. Wilson in his "Introduction of Nyakyusa Society" (Bantu Studies X, p. 271). The head of the family likes to eat together with his friends.

Meat is eaten very seldom, but on special occasions such as marriages, death lamentations, christenings of Christianized natives, enormous quantities are devoured. *Inyama* (Swahili: *nyama*) is the Nyakyusa word for all sorts of meat, *ingombe* for that of cattle and *ingombaku* for that of oxen. Near Utengule I saw black pigs (*ingurusue*, pig)

14:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 F767 Ngonde F767
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grubbing for food outside the stable. Old people also eat the meat of apes (*sulila, ape*) and of jakal (*ingebe*). The Nyakyusa men are generally very fond of eating fowl, indeed: "Wakuguna inguma nya inguku", they are fond of the flesh of fowl.

Bones are usually given to the children for gnawing. Eight to ten boys may be seen sitting in a circle and alternately gnaw on the same bone, often drinking a little milk (*ulukuma*) the while.

During a boating on Lake Nyasa I saw the well-known columnar clouds formed by the so-called Kungu-flies in the distance above the surface of the water. These flies are also eaten by the peoples on the shore of the Lake. When these insects come shore-wards they are caught, roasted at home and then eaten. But I was told that sometimes they are also caught and eaten out on the Lake, being squeezed into lumps between the hands.

The Nyakyusa eat with the right hand, but when the meal consists of such food as boiled maize and beans (*ingute*) they also use spoons (*ulusiko*) made of folded strips of banana leaves. Nowadays, however, tin spoons and tin plates have come into wide use. The ancient eating-mats (*akatefu*, diminutive of *uruisfu*) are also being more and more displaced.

When the meal is over, the vessels and plates are cleaned with the fingers, bent inward, and then licked off. The mouth is rinsed out with water.

10. Diet. The vegetable diet is roughly the following. The light meal in the morning consists mostly of boiled maize-cobs (*ingute*), sweet potatoes (*imbatata*), bananas (*ilitoki*, pl. *amatoki*), roasted bananas; or, *amawisfu*, sweet bananas. The main meal in the evening, shortly before sunset, usually consists of flour porridge (*ikiyindi*), beans (*indima*), both often boiled together with maize, peas (*efinyanga*) very often in the form of porridge, maize-corns (*ikirombo*) and groundnuts (*inyabala*, pl. *amanyabala*). These groundnuts are dried in the sun on mats. Bananas, if dried in the same manner, are usually halved lengthwise and spread out sometimes on banana leaves. I have seen this done in the village of Katumba. Granary stores are very often, e. g. near Utengule (on the border of Nyakyusa and Safwa culture), erected on platforms supported by poles. The container is a big quadrangular basket, roughly three by three meters in length and 1 m in height. The roof has the shape of a large Chinese hat and can be taken off from the lower part of the granary.